

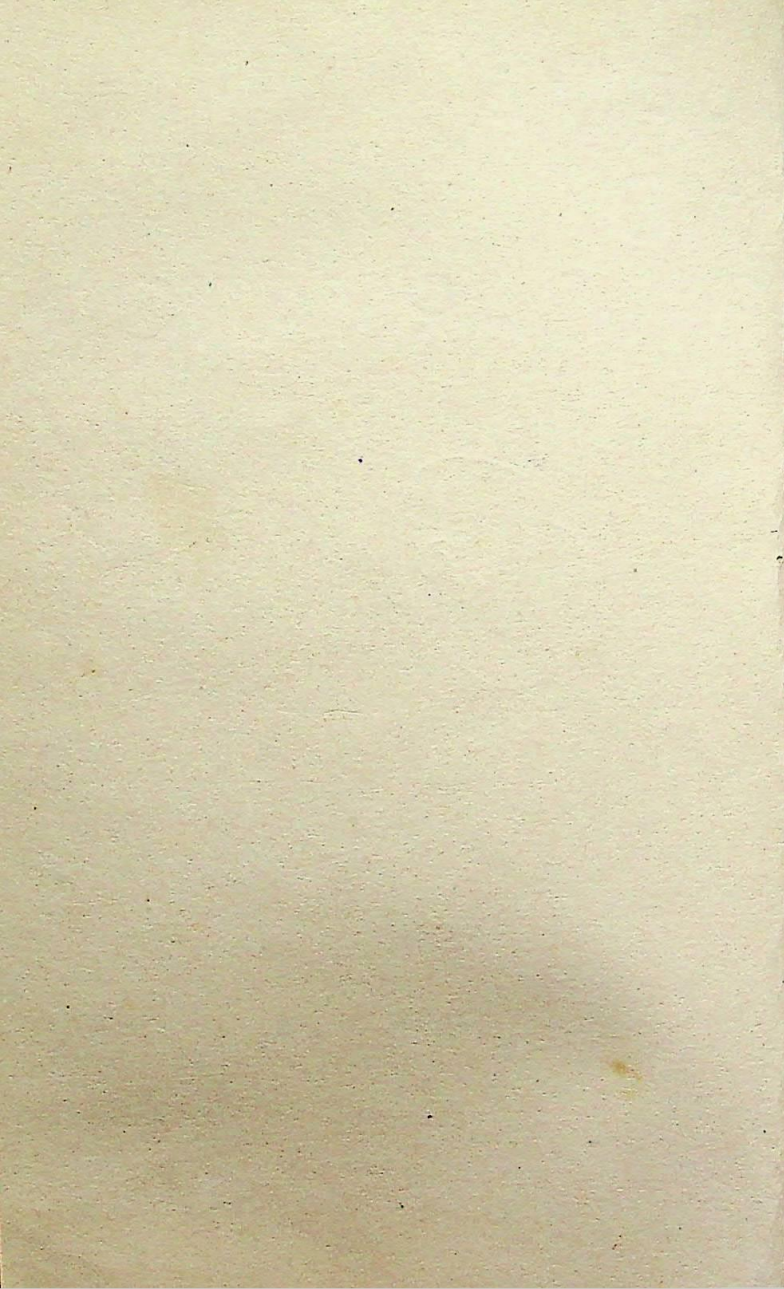
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KARMA AND REINCARNATION



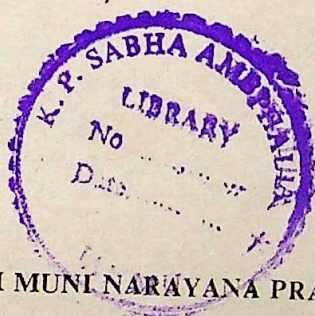
SWAMI MUNI NARAYANA PRASAD



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AND

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The day is bright. The time is around half-past nine in the morning. The Master is in his bedroom study, engrossed in his writings.

There is a knock at the door, and a youth of about eighteen enters. The Master welcomes him with a smile and offers him a seat.

Visitor: Master, I know you through the lessons you gave to Hari, my friend. I am Vineet. I had a chance to go through the lessons. Ever since reading them I have been thinking of visiting you. Today I have a problem of my own to discuss with you.

Master: What is your problem?

Vineet: I was a student in Form VI in the Ba Sangam College last year. I was doing well in my studies. One day I fell faint. My friends brought me home and I was taken to a doctor. The doctor found nothing wrong with me. The same thing happened a second time. Then I felt there was something really wrong with me. Gradually I lost interest in my studies and had to discontinue them. My parents took me to three doctors. None of them found anything wrong with me. Finally my father

told me, "This is because of your past *karma*." I didn't understand what he meant. Then I remembered the reference to *karman* in your lesson. So I thought it would be better to see you personally and clear my doubt. Can you tell me what your father meant? Of course, he was not able to give me any clear explanation.

M: Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism are the three religions of Indian origin. Now there is Sikhism too, but it is only an offshoot of Hinduism. Though it maintains itself as an exclusive religious denomination, the entire body of its teachings is that of Hinduism.

All the religions of Indian origin generally believe that the soul reincarnates again and again until it attains final liberation. The nature of the next birth depends on what one does in the present life. Everyone is responsible for what one does and is destined to enjoy or suffer the fruits of one's actions either in the present life or the next. This is what your father meant. The word *karma* means action or work.

V: I had gathered almost the same idea of *karma* from my father. But I don't understand how it results in the reincarnation of the soul.

M: First of all we have to realize that this is a field where our reasoning will never help us in coming to a definite conclusion. No one can give a satisfactory explanation of how our actions cause their results which we expect to enjoy, either in the present life or in the hereafter.

V: But in the case of the present life, we know how what we do leads us to an end result.

M: Then explain it to me.

I do hard work in my class and it results in my passing the examination with a high rank.

That is true. But your experiencing does not make an explanation. It is true that you do hard work and you get its result. But you don't know how your hard work is transformed into the end result which you enjoy. It seems there is an unknown link between the two. Some Indian thinkers call this unknown link *adr̥ṣṭa* which means 'the unseen' or 'the unknown.' We don't know the length of this unknown link. It may even extend to the hereafter. In that case the soul also has necessarily to continue to the world after death, another zone where we are always in total darkness. So whether we accept this theory or not, in either case it would only be a matter of belief. No reasoning could possibly substantiate it or reject it. Life as a whole is a great mystery. There is no end to the possibilities of wonderful phenomena in it. What we are discussing is one among them.

The pandits in Fiji call themselves *karma kāṇḍins*. Is it related to this idea?

To a certain extent, yes. The word *karma* is used in three different senses in the Indian scriptures.

What are they?

Its first meaning is, everything an individual does in the form of an action. Secondly it means rituals performed to propitiate the gods with the intention of getting certain attainments. Such rituals are prescribed in the beginning section of the four Vedas. This portion of the Vedas is therefore called *karma kāṇḍa*, which means the chapter on rituals. Those who perform such rituals are called *karma kāṇḍins*. The

latter section of the Vedas deals with the wisdom or *jñāna* and therefore it is called *jñāna kāṇḍa*. The third meaning of *karma* is, the latent impressions that cling to the soul as a result of the deeds one does in this life, and which are carried on to the next life.

V: As the word *karma* is used in different senses, can we say that there is no precise definition of it?

M: No. The definition is very precise and philosophical.

*“bhūta-bhāvodbhava-karo
visargaḥ karma-samjñitaḥ”*

This is the definition of *karma* in the Gita (VIII.3). It means, “The creative urge which is the cause of the emergence of existent beings, is designated *karma*.”

V: Whose action is defined here?

M: It is not that of any particular person.

V: I don't understand anything from this definition.

M: In order to understand this definition, you have first to give up all existing ideas of *karma* in your mind, and then visualize the universe as a whole. The universe is in an eternal process of change. It is often called the eternal flux. Newer and newer formulations emerge incessantly and the old ones disappear. Both scientists and philosophers agree that there should be something existing as a basis in which this flow could take place. There should be water as a basis for flow to happen, like a river. Similarly the flow of the universe should also have some reality as a basis. Physicists think that energy is this reality. The Indian philosophers think of an imperishable (*akṣara*) as this reality. This imperishable reality is much wider in scope than energy, it includes consciousness also within its scope. The imperishable reality is ever creative, just as water

always in the process of flowing downwards and fire in the process of flaming upwards. This creative urge results in the emergence of new forms and submergence of the old ones. Each of the forms which thus emerges is called a *bhāva*. This word means the emergence of a being, whether living or not. This creative urge that results in the emergence of all beings is called *karma*. Our birth and death are merely aspects of this creative process.

The totality of the emergent beings is called *prakṛti*. The English equivalent to it is 'Nature'.

Thus *karma* as a basic reality does not belong to any individual being. Whatever any individual does is merely part of the totality of nature. Each individual has the capability of doing something, only as an inseparable part of nature.

Then what about our saying "I did this" and "You did that?"

It is only nature that is working in and through us when we do something. But we are ignorant of it. Thus when I do something, I think "I am the doer of it". We are only taking on a role that is not really ours.

But I can think and make decisions about what I should do. I can also carry out willfully what I want to do. How can I say that I am not doing it?

When we say that it is nature that acts in and through us, it doesn't mean that we should not participate with the creativity of nature intelligently. Our intelligence and willingness are also part of that nature. So making use of them is also part of the function of nature.

Thus our responsibility as intelligent beings is to participate with the function of nature intelligently.

We can thus keep ourselves free, by being aware of the truth that it is only nature that works in all the cases. Actually this is the origin of the idea of *yaj* (burnt sacrifice). It is clearly stated in the Bhagavad Gita.

V: What does it say?

M: It says in Stanza III. 9:

*“yajñārthāt karmaṇo’nyatra
loko’yam karma-bandhanaḥ
tad-artham karma kaunteya
mukta-sangaḥ samācara.”*

V: What does it mean?

M: “Excepting activity meant as a sacrifice, this world is bound by actions. O Arjuna, do engage in activities with that (sacrifice) as the purpose, by being free from all attachments.”

Here the Gita says that all our activities, except the ones done as sacrifice, make us bound. Activities done as a sacrifice alone make us free. To symbolize this understanding, the Vedas of India suggested that men do *yajñas* or *havans*.

Everyone performs them as a religious ritual without knowing what they mean. They think that merely by doing these rituals one will attain *mukti*. *Mukti* or *mokṣa* means freedom from all bondage. Bondage is caused by our own attachment. The Gita, Stanza III. 15, also says that the entire cosmic system is founded on this principle of *yajña*: “*sarva-gaṇaḥ brahma nityam yajñe pratiṣṭhitam*” (the all pervading Absolute is founded eternally on the principle of *yajña*).

V: Then what about the *havans* and *yajnas*, people perform here? Do you think they are meaningless?

M: They are meaningful if, they are performed as an expression of the understanding of the above principle on the part of the performer. The only benefit of doing *havans* or *yajnas* without any understanding would be the satisfaction of having done a religious duty, and nothing more.

V: Suppose one does rituals with this understanding. How are they related to the unfoldment of the creativity of nature?

M: All worldly activities (*laukika karmas*) are in reality the unfoldment of the creativity of nature. The rituals (*vaidika karmas*) are meant to remind us of this reality. That is how they are related to the creativity of nature.

V: What does the Gita say on this?

M: Stanza IV. 33 says:

“śreyān dravyamayād yajñāt
jñāna-yajñah paramtapa
sarvam karmākhilam pārtha
jñāne parisamāpyate.”

“Superior to any sacrifice of materials is the wisdom sacrifice, O Arjuna. All actions have their end in wisdom”.

Here “all actions” means both worldly and ritualistic actions.

V: In that case a man of wisdom can have no activity. Yet we see that they are also engaged in activities.

M: Others will see him as being engaged in activities. But he will see himself as not doing any *karma*. He sees inaction in action and action in inaction. The

Gita points out the same when it says: "One who is able to see inaction in action and action in inaction, he is the intelligent among men. He is a yogi while engaged in every kind of work." (IV. 18)

V: How does its Sanskrit original read?

M: *"karmany akarma yaḥ paśyed
akarmaṇi ca karma yaḥ
sa buddhimān manuṣyeṣu
sa yuktaḥ kṛtsna-karma-kṛt."*

It means he does not see himself as the agent of action. He sees only nature function in his activities. We can also say that he sees God or *ātma* alone engaged in activities.

Sri Narayana Guru says: *Ātman* indeed does actions through *māyā* assuming many forms, though self-luminous and detached, like *taijasa* causes dream in sleep." Its Sanskrit text goes like this:

*"ātmaiva māyayā karma
karoti bahu-rūpa-dhṛk
asangatḥ svaprakāśopi
nidrāyām iva taijasatḥ."*

This comes in the *Karma Darśana* of his work called the *Darśana Māla*.

V: I have seen great *jñānins* also enjoying the beauty of nature, listening to good music, and things like that. Are they not attached to them while enjoying them?

M: They enjoy them, but not because they are attached to them. Having sense organs is part of our nature. Having objects which get into contact with these senses is also part of nature, just as it is nature

for the senses to get into contact with their respective objects. So when such a sense contact and perception happens, the *jñānins* see only the qualities of nature working on the respective qualities of the organs of sense. He still remains unattached. The Gita says: "O Arjuna, one who knows the principle underlying modes of nature (*guṇa*) as distinct from *karma*, understands that modes of nature work on modes of nature and thus does not become attached." (III. 28)

Q: How does its Sanskrit original go?

A: "tattvavīt tu mahā-bāho
guṇa karma vibhāgayoḥ
guṇā guṇeṣu vartanta
iti matvā na sajjate."

Q: It is a general belief among Hindus that every man is born with certain *karmas* to do and also to enjoy or suffer their results. Can we say that this is wrong? Actually it was this problem that gave a start to our discussion.

A: This is a very complex question. The Gita itself says: "The way of action is complex and elusively subtle." (*gahanā karmaṇo gatiḥ*-IV. 17.) So we have to look at it very keenly.

Let us look at it from the side of the universe as a whole. From that point of view every event is part of the function of the cosmic system. In this context no one is an agent of action. As we have seen, where there is *karma* there should also be a *kartā*, or one who claims: "This is my action." We see that the universe is functioning systematically. That means there is a consciousness that controls the universe.

This consciousness is called God by religions. Did God create *karmas* and their agents and also their respective enjoyments? This is the question. The Gita says "The Lord does not create either the agency of action or activities for the people. Nor did He create union with the benefits of action. The innate urge however exerts itself." (V. 14)

V: How is its original in Sanskrit?

M: "na kartṛtvam na karmāni
lokasya sṛjati prabhuh
na karma-phala-samyogam
svabhāvas tu pravartate."

That means, God did not create any *karma*, *kartā* *karma-phala*. Man, because of his ignorance, becomes confused and thinks that he is the agency of action and that he is doing it.

V: What about the *pāpa* and *punya* mentioned in our scriptures?

M: *Pāpa* and *punya* or sin and virtue, are also relevant only when one thinks that he is the one who does the activities. When one is not aware of the all-pervading reality which, in its functioning, appears here as the universe, he thinks that he is doing the activities. He is naturally worried about the merit and demerit he is likely to accumulate on himself. The Gita says in the next verse: "The all-pervading one (*vibhuh*) puts on neither merit nor demerit. Wisdom is veiled by ignorance. Thus beings are confused." (V. 15) Its Sanskrit original is like this:

"nādatte kasyacit pāpam
na caiva sukṛtam vibhuh

*ajñānenāvṛtam jñānam
tena muhyanti jantavaḥ."*

In other words, there is no *punya karma* and *pāpa karma* from the point of view of God. According to it everything that happens in nature is natural. The ignorant man thinks that he is the one who does and for him *pāpa* and *punya* are relevant. Only the man who finds his oneness with nature or totality or God is free from *pāpa* and *punya*. What he knows is Reality alone. The ignorant one creates his world of *pāpa* and *punya* and suffers because of it. As far as he is concerned that world is something actual. He becomes worried about it. The priests prescribe atonement rituals and he performs them. As he is very much concerned with the result of these rituals, they help him only become more tightly bound to actions. In short, it becomes a kind of vicious circle. This is the part of the *samsāra cakra* (wheel of the phenomenal world) referred to in the textbooks on Vedānta.

What about idol worship practised by people?

: Such worships or *pūjas* are prescribed in the *Purāṇas* or mythologies. The *Purāṇas* are mythological legends. They were created by rishis to teach us some principles in a symbolic way. The *pūjas* prescribed in them are also part of such symbols. But the very same *Purāṇas* tell us that these *pūjas* are to be performed only by the ignorant. For example, the twelfth section of the first chapter of the *Siva Purāṇa* says: "Unless and until wisdom is attained, everyone, including gods, has to perform the *pūja* as prescribed here." But no *Pūraṇa* claims that doing *pūja* or *yajña* will enable one to attain wisdom.

V: Suppose we accept for the sake of argument that it is only one and the same nature that works in and through all individual beings. How come every one of them is different in nature, capabilities and interests?

M: Here we have to look at the problem from another point of view, that is, from the point of view of the individual. The creativity inherent in nature is infinitely multifarious. Every being, including human beings in this universe, is like a leaf at the remote end of a twig in an endlessly branched tree. Every leaf in the tree has its own peculiarities and placement in the tree. Yet it is an integral part of the tree. Even so every individual being in the world has its own qualities and functions and a role to play in the cosmic system. If we delimit this to human affairs it leads us to the necessity of understanding the physical and psychological differences among human beings. Such a study will apprise us of the natural differences among individuals while still viewing them as being part of the cosmic system.

The Bhagavad Gita makes an elaborate study of these lines. In fact, the second half of the Gita, especially chapters XIII to XVIII, gives full attention to this aspect. Chapter XIII differentiates the *kṣētra* and *kṣetrajña* (physical and mental) aspects of individuals. The next chapter analyses the function of the three *guṇas* (nature modalities) called *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* in individual minds which causes all the differentiations. Chapter XV differentiates between the perishable and the imperishable aspects. Chapter XVI helps us to trace the divine and demonic natures of our mind. The next chapter elaborates the varieties of human interest and classifies them into three

categories. The last chapter shows how human beings naturally get engaged in different functions natural to each one. These functional phases are classified into four, namely *brāhmaṇa*, *kṣatriya*, *vaiśya* and *śūdra*. According to the Gita these four do not refer to any caste system of the society. It is a classification of the inner nature of human beings according to one's qualities (*guṇas*) and propensities for action (*karma*). With the help of these studies we should be able to determine our inner nature. Our activities in our daily life should be in accordance with this inner nature. When we are engaged in such activities we can say we are doing our *svadharma* (our own duty). Such activities ensure full satisfaction in life. The performance of such activities constitutes one's participation in the whole of nature. This is the theory of *svadharma* of the Bhagavad Gita. In doing our own *svadharma* we are not only doing our duty but we are finding our oneness with the totality of nature also. That keeps us fully free and satisfied while being engaged in activities. Thus our *karma* turns out to be *karma yoga*. The Gita says:

*"sve sve karmany abhirataḥ
samsiddhim labhate narah."* (XVIII. 45.)

"Finding self-satisfaction in one's own occupation, man reaches final attainment."

This self-satisfaction is not different from the ultimate happiness aimed at by everyone. In this attainment the Gita doesn't find any inferiority or superiority among *brāhmaṇas*, *kṣatriyas*, *vaiśyas* and *śūdras*.

These names do not refer to any caste distinction according to the Gita, but indicate only the psychological types of human beings.

V: All these are a revelation to me. Even when we are engaged in activities as our participation with the total system of life, there should be something that inspires each one of us to choose one's proper function.

M: It is our knowledge of external things, their utility to us, the way of utilizing them and also our requirements and interests that give us an incentive for doing something. The Gita makes an analysis of this. It says: "Knowledge, the object to be known, and the knower who knows, are the three-fold incentives for action."

In the absence of such a knowledge there will be no action from our side. It is as part of the total system of the universe that all these occur. The original Sanskrit text of the above is as follows:

*"jñānam jñeyam pariñātā
trividhā karma codanā."* (XVIII. 18)

V: Naturally many factors will have to participate in the actual performance of an action. Can you tell me what these factors are?

M: The second half of the above stanza answers this question. It says: "The instruments (both mental and physical), the actual action and the actor, thus three-fold is the collective base of action." Its Sanskrit is:

*"kāraṇam karma kartetī
trividhaḥ karma samgrahaḥ."*

Our mind, intellect, memories and the ego are the inner organs. Hands, legs, speech, excretory organs and reproductive organs are the external organs for action. All these constitute a basis for action also.

with the doer and the actual action. The Gita again classifies knowledge, action and actor based on the three *gunas* of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. The Gita also mentions the five causes for the accomplishment of action thus:

*"adhiṣṭhānam tathā kartā
karaṇam ca prithag vidham
vividhāśca prthak-ceṣṭā
daivam caivātra pañcamam."* (XVIII. 14)

It means: "The basis and actor, and also various instruments, several and varied motions, and the divine factor as the fifth."

Q: Can you explain it?

A: For every action to take place there should be something existing as a basis. For example, there should be water for flow to take place. That basis for all actions is the ultimate Truth. It is called *adhiṣṭhānam* here. There should be someone to do the action. He is the *kartā*. The actor should make use of various instruments. They can be mental, bodily or external tools. They are called *karaṇas*. Then there should be various movements happening. Such movements are called *ceṣṭās* here. And finally, there is an unknown factor which decides the fate of each and every motion. That factor is called *daivam*. Such is the overall picture of *karma* presented in the Gita. These *karmas* could be either bodily, verbal or mental.

All these are to be understood as belonging to one system or Truth which is called *Brahman*. Such is the real nature of *karma*. Those who are engaged in activities with this understanding are called *karma*

yogis. They will never have their own desires and willful motives for their actions.

Their action in effect becomes burned up in the fire of knowledge. They are really to be called *paṇḍita*. The Gita says: "The man whose works are all devoid of desire and willful motive, whose action has been reduced to nothing in the fire of wisdom, he is recognized as a *paṇḍita*."

*"yasya sarve samārambhāḥ
kāma samkalpa varjitāḥ
jñānāgni dagdha karmāṇam
tam āhuḥ paṇḍitam budhāḥ."* (IV. 19)

V: You told me that *pāpa* and *punya* in *karma* would be relevant in the case of the ignorant and that *jñāni* only go beyond their realm. Most people are ignorant so they are living in the world of *karma*, *pāpa* and *punya*. Can we say that these are real for the ignorant and unreal only for the *jñānins*?

M: This is as if asking, "Are there two different realities, one for the ignorant and the other for the *jñānin*?" It can never be. Reality is only one but it is understood properly only by *jñānins*. The ignorant, being unaware of Reality, think that what appears to be real is Reality, and suffer the consequences. Even when they are ignorant, they are really one with the ultimate Truth. They have only to become aware of it.

V: I understood that the man of wisdom or *jñānin* does not feel any necessity of getting engaged in activities. Then why can't he take a decision: "I will not do anything?"

M: Such a decision would be as wrong as willfully taking a decision: "I will do this." The difference between the

two decisions is that one is positive and the other is negative. Our constitution is such that we won't be able to live even a moment without being engaged in activities. Even when we are supposedly doing nothing, our internal organs are functioning. All activities, whether internal or external, are part of the eternal flow of nature or Life. No one can stop it. The Gita points this out very clearly when it says: "Even your bodily life would not progress through non-action." (*śarīra-yātrāpi ca te na prasiddhyed akarmaṇaḥ*-III. 8)

The Gita takes special care to stress this aspect more than once. For example in Stanza III. 5 it says: "Not even for a single moment can one ever remain engaged in no action at all. By virtue of the *guṇas* (modalities) born from nature all are made to engage in action helplessly."

This statement is at the beginning of the Gita. At the end also the Gita repeats this: "O Arjuna, you are bound by your own action which is born of nature. You do not like to do it only because you are confused. You shall do that very action helplessly." (XVIII. 60)

We are not free to get rid of the nature-born propensities in us. So the only alternative with us to keep us free is to perform such activities, as forming part of the totality of nature, or the ultimate Truth, with no attachment towards them. The ultimate Truth is called *Brahman* in Vedānta. Look at what the Gita says: "He who acts placing all actions in *Brahman* having given up attachments, is not affected by sin, like a lotus leaf is not affected by water."

*"brahmany ādhāya karmāṇi
sangam tyaktvā karoti yaḥ"*

*lipyate na sa pāpena
padma-patram iva ambhasā''* (V. 10)

V: Don't you think that we wouldn't care for the perfection and the end result of what we do, when we are not attached to what we do?

M: Not necessarily. What should happen is the opposite. When I do something that properly belongs to my nature I necessarily do it perfectly, because the perfection of what I do, which belongs to my nature, gives me full satisfaction. What I feel then is the unfolding of my own self. It is not the end result of what I do that makes me satisfied. The real satisfaction is in doing it perfectly. When it results favorably that can be enjoyed with the same attitude of detachment. If it ends in an unfavorable result that also is accepted with the same calmness. Thus one becomes able to find in one's own life a continuous flow of self-unfolding. The Gita says: "Giving up attachment for the benefit of works, though engaged in activities, really does nothing at all. He is ever happy and free."

V: How does its Sanskrit original read?

M: *"tyaktvā karma phalāśangam
nitya tṛpto nirāśrayaḥ
karmany abhi-pravṛttopi
naiva kincit karoti saḥ"* (IV, 20.)

V: It is not clear to me.

M: Take the case of the boys playing soccer. What do they gain by the play?

V: The joy of playing.

M: Is it experienced while playing or some time afterwards?

/: It is experienced while playing. When the game is over the joy remains only as a memory.

/: The same is the case with our activities which belong to our proper nature. We experience the joy of doing it perfectly, while doing it. That joy doesn't depend on its end result. It is in this sense the Gita says:

*"karmaṇy eva adhikāras te
mā phaleṣu kadā ca na"* (II. 47.)

"Your concern should be with action as such, not in any benefit ever."

This is the secret of the principle of *karma yoga* of the Gita. There the very actions we do serve as a means for finding our oneness with the totality or God.

Master, now another doubt comes up in my mind. We know that every one of us has a different character caused by the three *guṇas* of nature. Suppose we do our own *svadharma* according to these *guṇas* and that we find our oneness with nature in doing so. Even then, can't we say that the impact of what we do at present decides our future? In physical nature also we see that what happens in one moment decides what happens in the next. The development of our character is also similar. It depends on what one learns, thinks and does. That means it depends on one's *karmas*, whether physical or mental. Don't you see the relevancy of the effect of *karma* passing on to the future? Is it not what we see in the concept of reincarnation according to one's *karmas*?

What you say is correct. When we single out events in nature we see that each one of them is preceded and caused by one or many such events and succeeded

by and causing many in the future. Thus *karma* is the inner urge that causes events is incessant nature.

For example, take the case of the ocean. It is natural with the ocean that waves should be formulated on its surface. The size and force of one wave along with the force of the wind and many other factors, decide the size and force of the next wave. In that sense we can say the *karma* of the first wave is carried on to the second wave. But both the wave and their force, along with all other characteristics belong to the ocean.

Modern genetics also teaches us that the traits of one generation are passed on to future generations through genes. All characteristics of living beings are imprinted on its genes in the form of genetic code and they cause re-emergence of the same characteristics in future generations. We can say that this is another version of the *karma* theory of reincarnation. What we don't find in Genetics is the concept that the soul, with all the imprints of *karma*, leaves one body behind and takes up another body for their fulfillment.

We also have to keep in mind that the Advaita Vedanta doesn't accept the individuality of the soul as a reality. It is only a phenomenal appearance in Advaitins. There are only two schools of thought in India which treat the *karma* theory of reincarnation as an accepted creed. They are the two bhakti cults known as Vaishnavism and Shaiva Siddhanta. The two schools see Vishnu and Shiva respectively as the supreme Reality or *Brahman*.

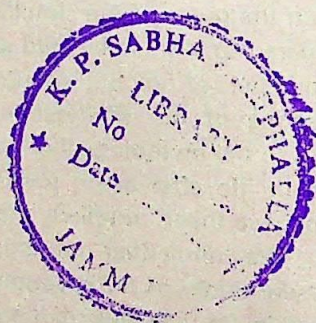
V: Do these two schools substantiate this theory?

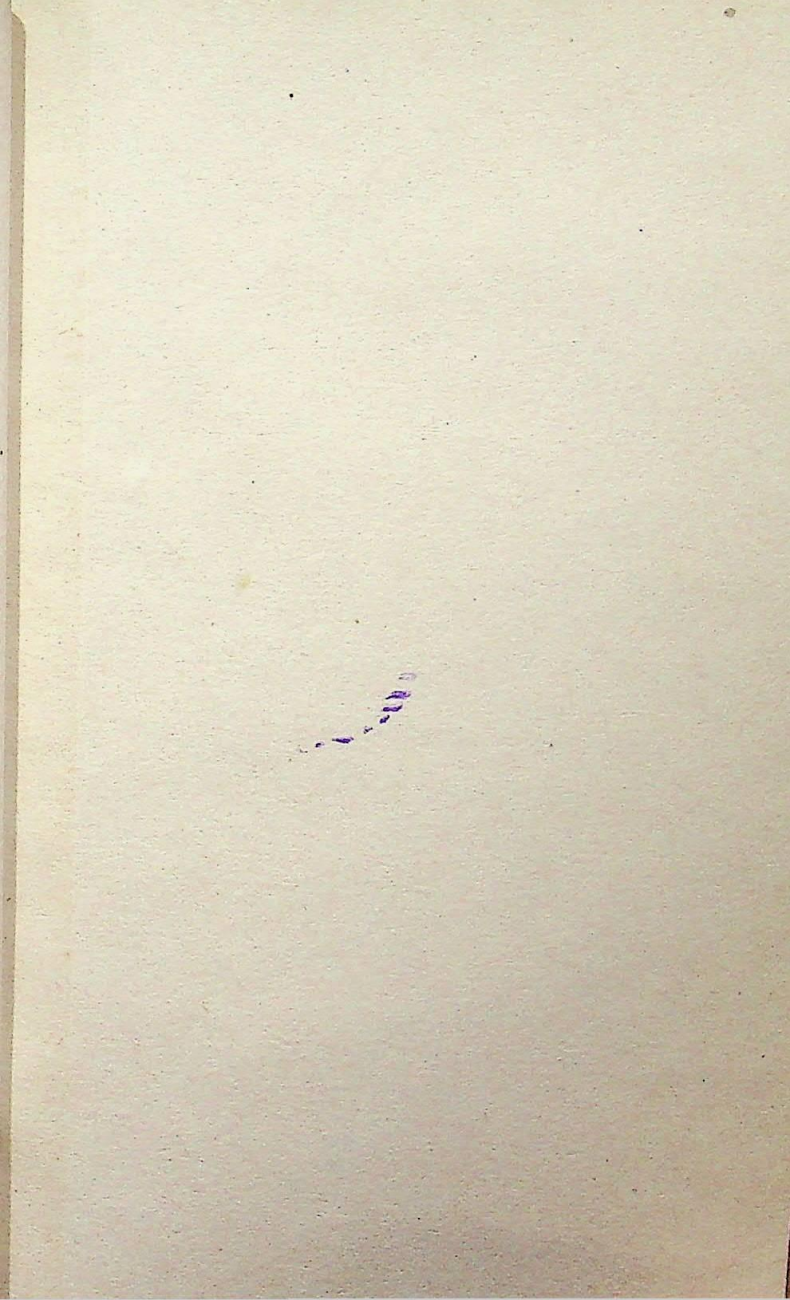
M: No. Such creeds are never substantiated in any scripture. As I have already told you, whether you accept it or reject it, in either case it is only a matter of belief. Such creeds can never be proved or disproved by reasoning. Our reasoning power is only a minute element of the unmeasurable and unknowable mystery of Truth. What is within the grasp of our intelligence is very little when compared to what is beyond its scope. We can create any number of fanciful stories about what is beyond the scope of our intelligence. There are many such stories in the mythologies of all religions. The stories about life after death forms part of it. We can either believe them or reject them. Both are matters of belief. We can neither prove it or disprove it. So when we think of the great mystery of *karma* that is inherent in the mystery of the ultimate Truth, we have to keep in mind that we are dealing with a realm of the unknown and the unknowable. We don't know what is possible and not possible there.

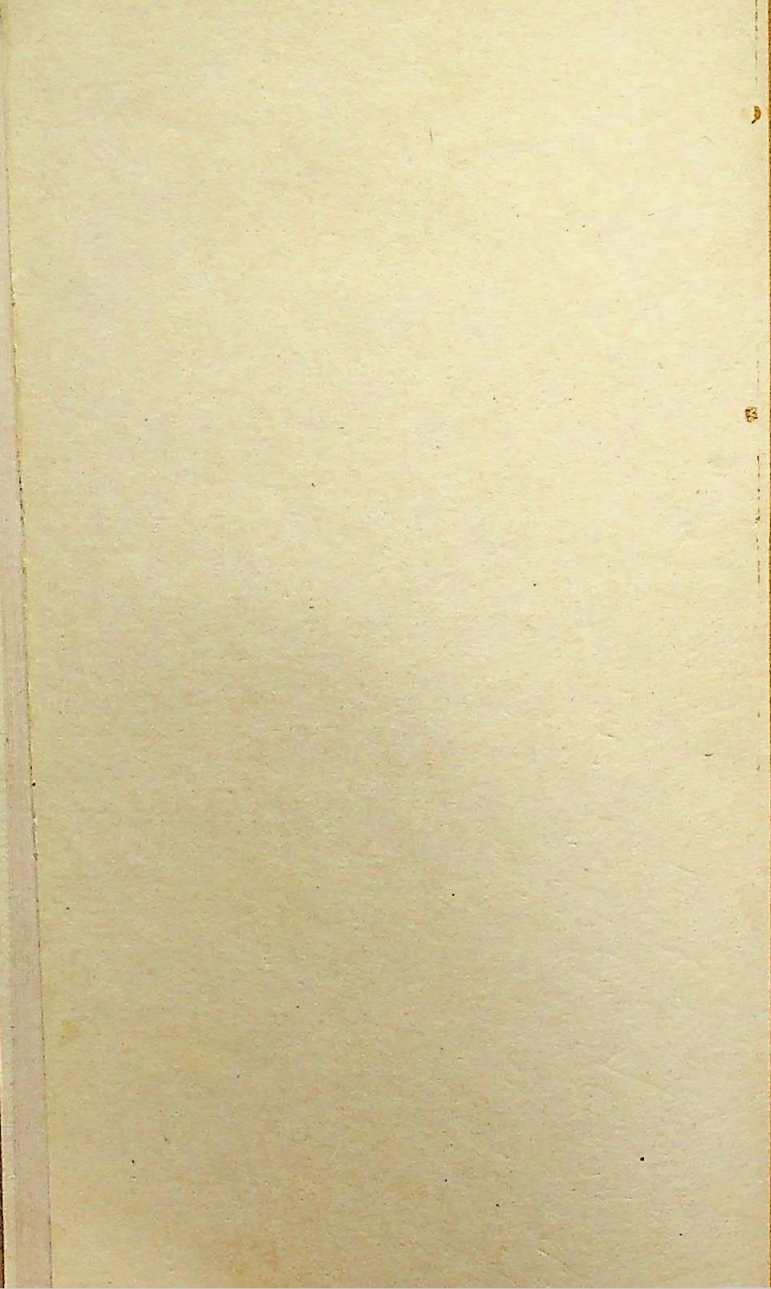
: Masterji, I thought we were approaching a definite conclusion. Now it seems we are approaching a mystery. Is this how our scriptures teach us?

1: All our ancient Masters were very definite about the ultimate Truth. And they wanted to convey that definiteness to us. But that definiteness was about the mystery of Truth. We are all part of that Great Mystery. Finding our oneness with It puts an end to all our enquiries, and ensures our Happiness.









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